

Message Text

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AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 00274

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, SA, US

SUBJECT: SAUDI CONCERN OVER BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW

REF: JIDDA 0067

1. BBC WORLD SERVICE HAS PROVIDED EMBASSY (THROUGH USIS) THE ENGLISH TEXTS OF TWO BROADCASTS IN ARABIC REGARDING SECRETARY'S INTERVIEW IN BUSINESS WEEK. BOTH TEXTS REPORT IN STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER, POINTING OUT THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER RULED OUT ARMED ACTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING DOWN OIL PRICES AND SPECIFIED USE OF FORCE WOULD BE CONSIDERED ONLY IN THE GRAVEST EMERGENCY AND AS A LAST RESORT. (COMMENT: WE DO NOT OF COURSE HAVE EXACT TEXT IN ARABIC.)

2. TEXT OF BULLETIN BROADCAST 0400 AND 0500 GMT JANUARY

3 AS FOLLOWS:

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"THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE, DR. KISSINGER, HAS

SAID THE WORLD ENERGY CRISIS CANNOT BE SOLVED WITHOUT A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION IN THE PRICE OF OIL; AND THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS FOR THIS ARE POOR. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE MAGAZINE BUSINESS WEEK, HE RULED OUT ARMED ACTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING DOWN THE PRICE OF OIL. THE USE OF FORCE, HE SAID, WOULD BE CONSIDERED ONLY IN THE GRAVEST EMERGENCY. AS DR. KISSINGER OBSERVED: "WE SHOULD HAVE LEARNED FROM VIETNAM THAT IT IS EASIER TO GET INTO A WAR THAN TO GET OUT OF IT." BUT THAT WAS NOT TO SAY THAT THERE WERE NOT CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THEY WOULD USE FORCE--IT WAS ONE THING, HE SAID, TO USE IT IN THE CASE OF A DISPUTE OVER PRICE; BUT IT WAS ANOTHER WHERE THERE WAS ACTUAL STRANGULATION OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD. DR. KISSINGER ALSO SPOKE OF THE DANGERS OF POLITICAL (UNDERLINED) WARFARE AGAINST LEADING OIL PRODUCERS, SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN, IN AN EFFORT TO BRING DOWN PRICES. BEFORE A CONFERENCE WITH THE OIL-PRODUCING COUNTRIES, HE SAID THERE MUST FIRST BE A CO-ORDINATED APPROACH BY OIL CONSUMERS. BUT HE BELIEVED THAT THE WHOLE WESTERN WORLD, WITH THE EXCEPTION PERHAPS OF THE UNITED STATES, WAS SUFFERING FROM POLITICAL MALAISE, FROM INNER UNCERTAINTY AND A LACK OF DIRECTION."

3. TEXT OF SHORTER BULLETIN BROADCAST 1300 GMT JANUARY 3 AS FOLLOWS:

"THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE, DR. KISSINGER, HAS SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD ONLY CONSIDER USING MILITARY FORCE AGAINST OIL-PRODUCING STATES IF THE WESTERN WORLD WAS FACED WITH ACTUAL ECONOMIC STRANGULATION AND COLLAPSE BECAUSE OF THE OIL SITUATION. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE MAGAZINE BUSINESS WEEK, DR. KISSINGER SAID HE WANTED TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE USE OF FORCE WOULD BE CONSIDERED ONLY IN THE GRAVEST EMERGENCY. AND LATER WHEN HE WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT THE MAGAZINE INTERVIEW, HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE OIL PROBLEM WOULD BE SOLVED WITHOUT FORCE. THE BBC WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT SAYS THE FEELING IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT APPEARS TO BE THAT DR. KISSINGER'S REMARKS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS A WARNING DIRECTED AGAINST THE ARAB STATES BUT RATHER AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE LAST RESORT SHOULD THE

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LACK OF OIL THREATEN THE ECONOMIC COLLAPSE OF THE WEST."

4. ANGUS MCDERMID REPORTING IN ENGLISH FROM WASHINGTON SPOKE ALONG SAME LINES THOUGH HE NOTED SECRETARY'S WORDS HAD LEFT OPEN THE IMPLICATION THAT THERE COULD BE CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE USE OF FORCE COULD CONCEIVABLY BE CONSIDERED.

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